laws of physics and chemistry. In this sense life is only " a combination of physical and chemical processes[5]>.

[One cannot but ask—How does he know this ? Is he not here begging the question at issue ?] But it is possible that such a point of view does not touch at all the real biological problem—and in *this* sense life *is* more than a mere heap of physical and chemical processes and has its " own laws ". The physico-chemical explanation of the single phenomena in the organism does not, therefore, suffice for the foundation of theoretical biology. For the essential characteristic of living things as such—the arrangement or organization of materials and processes— it gives no explanation, and offers no possibility of setting up laws for this characteristic. The view that simply by means of a knowledge of the physics and chemistry of the materials and processes of the organism biology will become a branch of physics and chemistry, and so render a theory of the organism superfluous, is thus quite untenable.' And: c The fundamental objection to it [mechanism or mechanical biology] is not that the physico-chemical explanation of vital processes has not yet been brought to a conclusion, but that there are fundamental biological problems which cannot possibly be dealt with by the traditional mechanistic explanatory principle.'

I confess that Bertalanffy seems to me to play fast and loose with physico-chemical explanation, and also to manifest some confusion while trying to distinguish clearly between description and

explanation. However, it is clear that his organicism is meant both to describe and to expkin. The following is decisive as to that:

* This view [the one he aims to establish], considered as a method of investigation, we shall call " organismic